

STACKHOUSE PARK AML RECLAMATION PROJECT

CONSTRUCTION, USE, ABANDONMENT & RECLAMATION OF THE ELK RUN SHAFT

Abstract

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The Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection (DEP), Bureau of Abandoned Mine Reclamation's (BAMR) Project, OSM 11(1052) 101.1, Stackhouse Park, is located in Westmont Borough, Cambria County, Pennsylvania. Stackhouse Park, where the project gets its name, is a public nature park that covers 227 acres. The park was a gift to the City of Johnstown from The Cambria Iron Company in 1931.

Beneath the grounds of Stackhouse Park, lies the Rolling Mill and Rosedale Mines. The Elk Run Shaft extended through the Rolling Mill Mine and down to the Rosedale mine providing a haulage way through the Rosedale mine to transport coal from the Rolling Mill Mine to the Rosedale Coke Plant. The haulage method was considered state of the art at the time and was featured in a 1921 article in Coal Age Magazine.

The Elk Run Shaft was 12 feet in diameter and 350 feet in depth. Although the top of the shaft, when abandoned in 1931, was screened, it became an attractive nuisance for many of the park's visitors. Later efforts to prevent access included reinforcement to the screen and fencing. As time passed the cap and collar deteriorated and visitors to the park found their way through the fencing and gained access to the shaft. This shaft was not only a fall hazard, but also hazardous because of poisonous gasses emanating from the mine through the shaft.

This presentation will explore how the shaft was constructed and its "state of the art" use during mining operations. It will then cover the history and production of the Rolling Mill and Rosedale Mines, including the devastating 1902 explosion in the Rolling Mill Mine. Also covered are the reclamation challenges BAMR faced during the development, design, and construction of the reclamation project. And finally it will show the partnering work done by the Johnstown Heritage Association and others to commemorate the historical significance and heritage of the Elk Run Shaft.

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